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AN INSTRUMENT DESIGNED TO SECURE INFORMATION RELATIVE TO COMMUNITY ATTITUDES.

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NEVADA WESTERN STATES SMALL SCHOOLS PROJ.

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A 3-CHOICE ATTITUDINAL SCALE WAS CONSTRUCTED TO DETERMINE COMMUNITY ATTITUDES AND PERCEPTIONS WHICH MIGHT AFFECT THE SCHOOL PROGRAM. THE SCALE WAS CONSTRUCTED AROUND 1 GENERAL AND 4 SPECIFIC CATEGORIES--(1) ADMINISTRATION, (2) FINANCE, (3) GENERAL ATTITUDES, (4) PERSONNEL, AND (5) PROGRAM. THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT IS INCLUDED, AS WELL AS DATA ON SAMPLE SELECTION, CATEGORY FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION AND ITEM ANALYSIS, AND SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADMINISTRATION AND SCORING. (DK)

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WESTERN STATES SMALL SCHOOLS PROJECT

COMMUNITY SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Developed for the

Western States Small Schools Project

by

J. Clark Davis
University of Nevada

and

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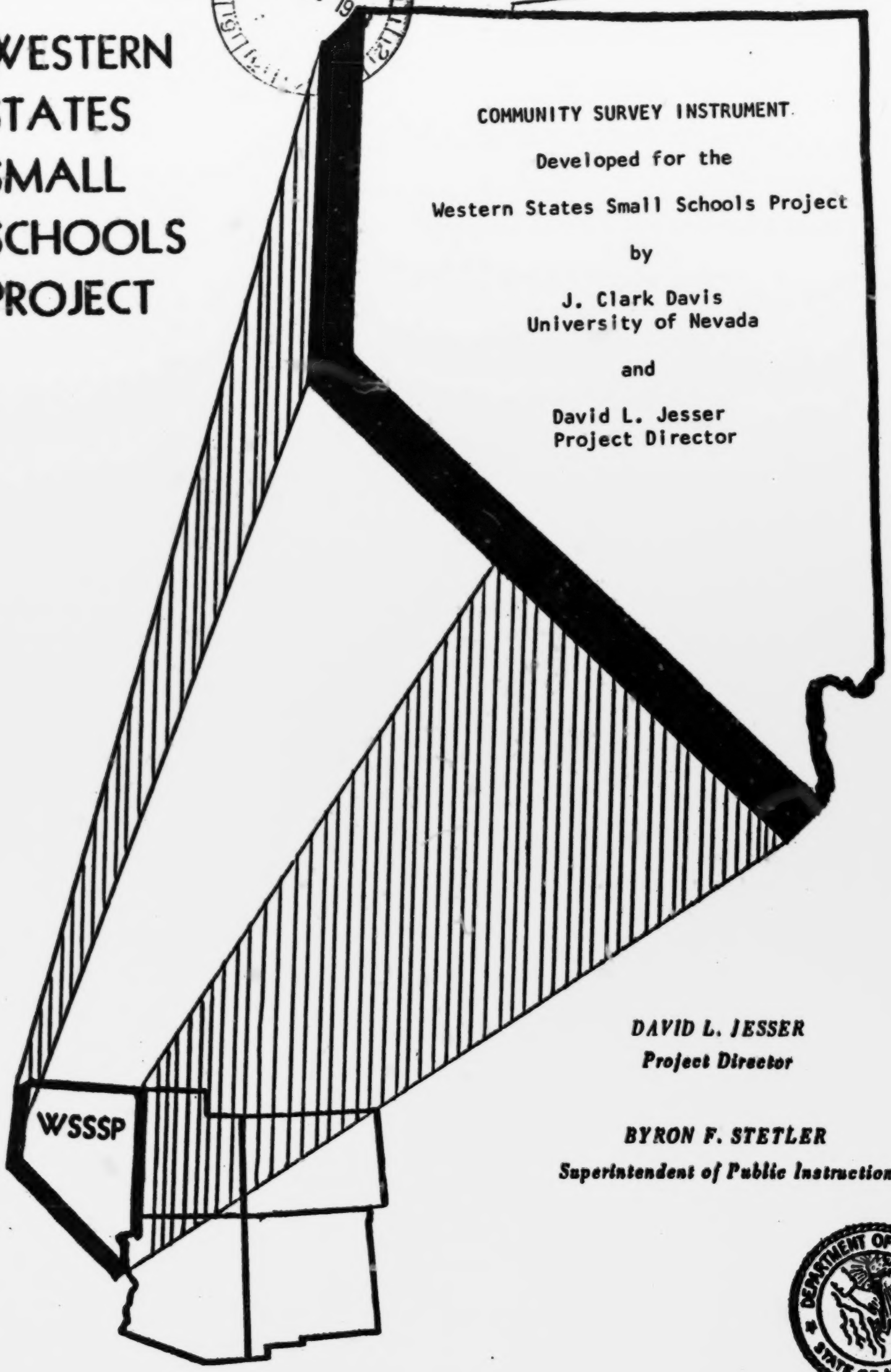

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STATE OF NEVADA

RC002479

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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WESTERN STATES SMALL SCHOOLS PROJECT

FOR NEVADA

AN INSTRUMENT DESIGNED TO SECURE INFORMATION RELATIVE TO COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

NEVADA PORTION

OF

WESTERN STATES SMALL SCHOOLS PROJECT CASE STUDY

Developed by

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University of Nevada
and
David L. Jesser
Project Director for Nevada

Byron F. Stetler
Superintendent of Public Instruction

October 29, 1962

INTRODUCTION

The Western States Small Schools Project, which is a cooperative endeavor involving the states of Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah, has for some time felt a need for an instrument which would, in effect, furnish a rather comprehensive "picture" of the schools involved in the project. The basic underlying thought has been that information could be gathered at the outset of the project, and then could be used as a base for determining what, if any, changes take place during the life of the project.

Each of the states involved in the WSSSP, after several meetings of an exploratory nature, was given a specific responsibility for the investigation and possible development of one area or portion of the total document, which has been termed the "case study."

As its part in the overall development of the case study, Nevada was assigned the responsibility of identifying and/or developing an instrument which might be used to determine and measure community attitudes toward the school. With this purpose in mind, Mr. David Jesser, Director of the Nevada WSSSP and Mr. Jack Davis of the University of Nevada, have attempted to briefly survey what types of instruments have already been developed, and determine which of these (or portions thereof) might be adaptable for use with the WSSSP case study document.

None of the instruments reviewed seem to be applicable <u>en toto</u>, as all are quite lengthy, and hence, too time-consuming for use with the case study document.

THE COMMUNITY ATTITUDE SURVEY

The community survey instrument which has been developed by Nevada as a portion of the overall case study development by the Western States Small Schools Project is, in its simplest form, an attitudinal instrument. It is predicated on the belief that the general support given to (or withheld from) a school by its community results in part from attitudes and perceptions formed and held by the citizens. This should not imply that such attitudes are necessarily valid, but it should infer that valid or not, attitudes do exist, and that they do play a prominent role in the ever-changing school program.

Those responsible for the development of the Nevada portion of the WSSSP case study document first attempted to identify basic areas in which attitudes and perceptions of the citizenry might affect the school program, and in doing this, identified four specific areas plus one area of a general nature. These are: (1) Administration, (2) Finance, (3) General Attitudes, (4) Personnel, and (5) Program. Items for the instrument were constructed with these categories in mind.

Considerable discussion was centered around the format and the type of response desired. Since one aim of those developing the instrument was simplicity of administration, it was originally felt that a "forced-choice" response would be most suitable. However, after preliminary work had been done, and after discussion by the entire "case study team," it was generally agreed that the "forced choice" response might tend to invalidate the results. With this in mind, a third choice - "Undecided" - has been included in the present form of the instrument.

In reviewing the several instruments already developed, it was noted that in most instances the items were divided into the various categories mentioned previously, with the categories themselves listed as sections

within the instrument. In the case of the Nevada instrument, it was felt that the items should not be openly categorized in any way, in order to offset any "set" effect.

The instrument, as developed, is presented on the following pages.

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

CITY AND STATE

Dear Interested Citizen:

The State Department of Education, working with state departments in other Western States, is cooperating in selected communities to explore the citizen's attitude toward schools.

We are asking a number of people in your community to respond to this survey. You have been identified as a person having knowledge of relations between your schools and the community. Information received from you will help to provide a complete picture of the general attitude of people toward schools in the Western States.

Your careful attention to this survey form is appreciated. We ask that you complete the survey form as quickly as possible and enclose it in the self-addressed envelope. No postage is required.

WE NEED THE RESPONSE OF EACH AND EVERY PERSON SELECTED TO RECEIVE THIS FORM. Since we have not asked you to identify yourself, we cannot check on whether your form has been returned. Consequently you will receive no reminder to return this survey form.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

(signature of superintendent)

Superintendent of
Public Instruction

(director's signature)

Project Director
Western States Small Schools Project

WESTERN STATES SMALL SCHOOLS PROJECT

COMMUNITY SURVEY

PLEASE CHECK:

1. Who filled out this survey form?

1.	Mother with children in school	_____
2.	Father with children in school	_____
3.	Mother with no children in school	_____
4.	Father with no children in school	_____
5.	Other	_____

2. Marital Status:

1.	Married	_____
2.	Single	_____

3. Number of children in our family under five years of age:

1.	Age under 1 year	_____
2.	Age 1 year	_____
3.	Age 2 years	_____
4.	Age 3 years	_____
5.	Age 4 years	_____

4. Write in the blanks the number of children you have enrolled in the following grades:

	Grade	
1.	K	_____
2.	1	_____
3.	2	_____
4.	3	_____
5.	4	_____
6.	5	_____
7.	6	_____
8.	7	_____
9.	8	_____
10.	9	_____
11.	10	_____
12.	11	_____
13.	12	_____
14.	Special Education	_____

5. In what age group do you belong?

1. I am between 21 and 30 years of age ____
2. I am between 31 and 40 years of age ____
3. I am between 41 and 50 years of age ____
4. I am between 51 and 60 years of age ____
5. I am over 60 years of age ____

6. What is the occupation of the "breadwinner" in your household?

1. Farmer ____
2. Military ____
3. Professional (doctor, lawyer, dentist, etc.) ____
4. Businessman ____
5. Skilled (bricklayer, electrician, carpenter, etc.) ____
6. Semi-skilled (truck driver, filling station attendant, custodian, etc.) ____
7. Retired ____
8. Housewife ____
9. Other ____

7. Do you own your home?

1. Buying ____
2. Renting ____

8. How long have you lived in this school district?

1. Less than 1 year ____
2. 1 year ____
3. 2 years ____
4. 3 years ____
5. 4 years ____
6. 5 years ____
7. 10 years ____
8. Longer than 10 years ____
9. Do not live in district ____

The following statements should be answered by checking the box which most accurately represents your feeling concerning the local school. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS. WE ARE INTERESTED IN HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS.

Generally True	Undecided	Generally Not True	
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	1. The school buildings and grounds are attractive to the extent that members of the community take pride in their schools appearance.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	2. Problems existing in the school are recognized and acknowledged by the superintendent and principal.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	3. A number of the principal's rules and regulations are in effect which hamper the progress of the students and staff.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4. The school is adequately preparing students not planning to go to college as well as those planning to go to college.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	5. I believe that the school is an extremely important place and doing important work.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	6. The teaching staff carefully considers solutions to school problems before making decisions.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	7. Teachers favorably receive suggestions from the community concerning improvements for the school.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	8. The school principal permits each teacher the right to assign or not to assign homework.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	9. Relations between all employees of the school are excellent.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	10. Students in our schools are receiving adequate training for responsible citizenship.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	11. Teachers invite members of the community to speak in their classes.

The following statements should be answered by checking the box which most accurately represents your feeling concerning the local school. THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS. WE ARE INTERESTED IN HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS.

Generally True	Undecided	Generally Not True	
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	1. The school buildings and grounds are attractive to the extent that members of the community take pride in their schools appearance.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	2. Problems existing in the school are recognized and acknowledged by the superintendent and principal.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	3. A number of the principal's rules and regulations are in effect which hamper the progress of the students and staff.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4. The school is adequately preparing students not planning to go to college as well as those planning to go to college.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	5. I believe that the school is an extremely important place and doing important work.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	6. The teaching staff carefully considers solutions to school problems before making decisions.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	7. Teachers favorably receive suggestions from the community concerning improvements for the school.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	8. The school principal permits each teacher the right to assign or not to assign homework.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	9. Relations between all employees of the school are excellent.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	10. Students in our schools are receiving adequate training for responsible citizenship.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	11. Teachers invite members of the community to speak in their classes.

Generally True	Undecided	Generally Not True		
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	12.	Pupil discipline in school is supported by the parents.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	13.	Children are encouraged to use library books to work on their home assignments.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	14.	School personnel are friendly toward members of the community.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	15.	The superintendent and principal make use of citizens in the community to aid in the solving of school problems.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	16.	The majority of the teachers in the local schools understand the problems of their students.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	17.	Teachers' comments concerning the school are generally favorable.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	18.	The schools are developing students so they will have desirable citizenship characteristics.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	19.	The school recognizes and appreciates the time and effort offered by community members.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	20.	Your school attempts new approaches and methods in instruction.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	21.	If there were to be a tax increase in your community because of an increase in school services, most people would support the tax.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	22.	Such activities as school dances, athletic events, music festivals, etc., are well organized and function smoothly.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	23.	This community strongly supports the local school.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	24.	The superintendent and principal keep the community informed concerning student and school accomplishments.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	25.	Parents feel free to make suggestions to teachers for improving the school.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	26.	An adequate program in the practical arts area (home economics, shop, drafting, typing, etc.) is provided for students.

Generally True	Undecided	Generally Not True	
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	27. Teachers are overloaded with non-teaching assignments (bus duty, hall duty, yard supervision, etc.)
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	28. Parents feel free to make suggestions to the principal or superintendent for improving the school.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	29. If the school leaders in this community favor something, you can be quite sure it is all right.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	30. The superintendent or principal recognizes and uses suggestions offered by staff members.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	31. Pupils receive adequate help in planning courses that fit their vocational desires.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	32. I feel that high standards of achievement and learning are expected of the students.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	33. I agree with the present emphasis placed on homework assigned by the teachers.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	34. The school is staffed with adequate guidance and counseling personnel.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	35. It is felt that the system for reporting pupil progress to parents (report cards, conferences) is adequate.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	36. If there were a need for a new school building next year, the community would support the passing of a bond issue.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	37. Parents are welcome to visit the school at any time.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	38. Our community generally supports extra taxes or bonds needed to enlarge or enrich the educational program.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	39. The school is a source of pride in the community.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	40. Our schools are adequately preparing the students who do not plan to go on to college.

Generally True	Undecided	Generally Not True		
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	41.	I believe that the community greatly helps the school to achieve its goals.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	42.	Our schools place emphasis on how a student may make future use of the knowledge he gains in school.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	43.	The school is doing an excellent job of educating students.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	44.	Our school does a good job of maintaining the buildings and grounds in a neat and orderly way.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	45.	The best available teachers are hired for each position.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	46.	The local school feels it is important for all students to learn as much as possible in school.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	47.	The school has informed the community of what it wants to accomplish (goals).
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	48.	Our school is doing a poor job of teaching students responsible citizenship.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	49.	Information given to the community concerning school objectives is not adequate.
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	50.	I believe that the school district should be given the first opportunity to use local property taxes.

E X P L A N A T O R Y N O T E S

PRE-TEST

This instrument was pre-tested on a group of sixty-two subjects both men and women. The grade level of attainment for the group ranged from the ninth grade through the first year of graduate study on the college level. Changes were made on a few of the survey items after an analysis of the pre-test.

SAMPLE SELECTION

Sampling methods will follow as closely as is possible random selection.

It is recognized that there are several methods of obtaining valid samples, and it is further recognized that the best method in one instance may not be the most desirable in another. In view of the foregoing, changes may well have to be made at the local or state level. However, in the hope that the total sample will be reliable, the following paradigm is offered as being the most desirable:

It is suggested that the sample should consist of approximately 100 subjects.

Let us assume that a population of a school attendance area, as determined by a county assessor's tax roll or a similar source, numbers 1200. We should now divide the tax roll population by the number that represents our desired sample. $\left(\frac{1200}{100} = 12\right)$.

The next step is to select <u>any number less</u> than twelve (12) to serve as the first selection number. Let us, for example, select half of twelve (12), which is six (6). We should thereafter add twelve (12) to each established selection number.

Example

Tax roll number ---------- 1200

Desired sample ---------- 100

Base number ---------- $\frac{1200}{100} = 12$

$\frac{1}{2}$ base number ---------- $\frac{1}{2} \times 12 = 6$ (first random selection number)

The digit six (6) represents the first selection number. This means that the sixth person listed on the tax roll would represent the first random selection of the sample. The second random selection is obtained by adding the first selection number (6) to the base number (12), which totals eighteen (18). 6 + 12 = 18. The third random selection is obtained by adding the second selection number (18) to the base number (12) which totals thirty (30). 12 + 18 = 30.

This process should be followed until the sample number (100) is obtained.

In the event that an individual representing a selection number has withdrawn from the community, or for other reasons may not be available, the following procedure is suggested. The number immediately preceding a selection number should then be employed. If circumstances negate the use of this designated number, then the next lowest number should be used. If difficulty in selection still persists, the number immediately above the selection number should then be employed. If circumstances negate the use of this designated number, then the next highest number should be used.

Example: The selection number is 18.

The first alternative is the selection number less one, which is seventeen (18 - 1 = 17).

The second alternative is the selection number less one, which is sixteen (18 - 2 = 16).

The third alternative is the selection number plus one, which is nineteen (18 + 1 = 19).

The fourth alternative is the selection number plus two, which is twenty (18 + 2 = 20).

CATEGORY FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION AND ITEM ANALYSIS

The following table shows the category frequency distribution of the instrument.

TABLE I

Category Frequency Distribution

Category	Frequency of Items
Administration	8
General Attitude	15
Finance	4
Personnel	7
Program	16
Total Items	50

The second table presents an item analysis by category.

TABLE II

Item Analysis

Category	Items
Administration	2, 3, 8, 15, 24, 27, 28, 30
General Attitude	1, 5, 12, 19, 23, 25, 29, 37, 39, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49
Finance	21, 36, 38, 50
Personnel	6, 7, 9, 14, 16, 17, 45
Program	4, 10, 11, 13, 18, 20, 22, 26, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 40 42, 48

WEIGHTED ATTITUDES

Each item is weighted. The following table shows the weight given to each of the three choices (1) generally true, (2) undecided, and (3) not generally true for each item.

TABLE III

Weighted Attitudes Per Item In Order of Magnitude From Positive to Negative*

Item	Generally True	Undecided	Generally Not True
1.	3	2	1
2.	3	2	1
3.	1	2	3
4.	3	2	1
5.	3	2	1
6.	3	2	1
7.	3	2	1
8.	3	2	1
9.	3	2	1
10.	3	2	1
11	3	2	1
12	3	2	1
13.	3	2	1
14.	3	2	1
15.	3	2	1
16	3	2	1
17.	3	2	1
18.	3	2	1
19.	3	2	1
20.	3	2	1
21.	3	2	1
22.	3	2	1

Item	Generally True	Undecided	Generally Not True
23.	3	2	1
24.	3	2	1
25.	3	2	1
26.	3	2	1
27.	1	2	3
28.	3	2	1
29.	3	2	1
30.	3	2	1
31.	3	2	1
32.	3	2	1
33.	3	2	1
34.	3	2	1
35.	3	2	1
36.	3	2	1
37.	3	2	1
38.	3	2	1
39.	3	2	1
40.	3	2	1
41.	3	2	1
42.	3	2	1
43.	3	2	1
44.	3	2	1
45.	3	2	1
46.	3	2	1
47.	3	2	1
48.	1	2	3
49.	1	2	3
50.	3	2	1

* Positive Attitude - 3 Undecided - 2 Negative Attitude - 1

SCORING

It is recommended that all scoring be completed at one scoring area. Identification of a particular community for scoring and analysis purposes could be accomplished by typing the name of the community on the return address portion of the postpaid envelope addressed to the State Department of Education.

Survey forms should be hand scored and then item scores should be punched on IBM cards. Data processing machines then will sort the cards as desired. The approximate cost for hand scoring and use of data processing for 6000 survey forms would be $2000.

The first year data will be analyzed by employing such processes as frequency polygons, percentage distributions and other interpretive designs. At the end of this three year study data will be statistically analyzed.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

1. All survey forms should be answered and returned directly to project directors of each State.

2. All sample selections for distributing the survey should be made under the specific direction of the project coordinator.

3. Scoring and analysis of community survey data for all states involved should be accomplished by <u>one</u> scoring and analysis team.

4. December 1 is approximately the earliest date this survey could be administered. Time is needed to prepare the forms and self-addressed envelopes that are to be sent to the respondents in each state. Also a certain amount of time is needed to select the people who will complete the survey. Certainly it is imperative that the survey be administered as soon as possible.

5. It is advised that respondents not be asked to place their names on the survey form. It is assumed that people in small communities would feel that if their names were placed upon the survey it would be possible for their responses to be identified by local school people. (The preceding would negate "follow-up" procedures.)

6. Project directors should take the necessary time to explain to participating school administrators that the information obtained is confidential. Local school administrators should be given the survey analysis report of <u>their</u> community as soon as possible.